

Message Text

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13
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 2058

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJ: ANTI-COW SLAUGHTER AGITATION

REF: NEW DELHI 12344, PARA FOUR

1. ANTI-COW SLAUGHTER LEGISLATION IS NOT REGARDED AS A
SERIOUS POSSIBILITY IN WEST BENGAL. MOSLEMS MAKE UP
APPROXIMATELY TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OF
THE STATE AND COMPRISE AN EVEN LARGER PROPORTION OF
CONGRESS PARTY MEMBERSHIP. MOSLEMS IN THE WEST BENGAL
CONGRESS ARE MAINLY MODERATES AND CONSERVATIVES AND
THEREFORE PLAY A CENTRAL AND STABILIZING ROLE BOTH IN
THE PARTY AND IN THE GOWB. CHIEF MINISTER RAY GETS HIM-
SELF ELECTED FROM THE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY MOSLEM DISTRICT
OF MALDA AND RELIES HEAVILY ON MOSLEM POLITICIANS IN
DEEPING HIS CABINET TOGETHER.

2. FOR ALL THESE REASONS ANTI-COW SLAUGHTER LEGISLATION
SEEMS ALMOST OUT OF THE QUESTION IN WEST BENGAL. THERE
HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY NO TALK OF IT HERE (THOUGH PEOPLE
KNOW THAT IT IS UNDER CONSIDERATION ELSEWHERE) AND ALL
THOSE WE HAVE ASKED ABOUT IT HAVE DISMISSED IT OUT OF
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HAND. MOSLEM SENSITIVITIES HAVE ALREADY BEEN DANGEROUS-

LY AROUSED IN WEST BENGAL OVER THE ISSUE OF POPULATION
CONTROL AND STERILIZATION. TO ADD ANTI-COW SLAUGHTER
LEGISLATION AT THIS TIME WOULD BE FOLLY OF A SORT THAT
NO LOCAL POLITICIAN WOULD LIKELY RISK, EVEN ON ORDERS
FROM THE PRIME MINISTER, THOUGH IN A MORE QUIET PERIOD
SOME SORT OF MEANINGLESS AND UNENFORCED ANNOUNCEMENT
REGARDING REGULATION OF COW SLAUGHTER MIGHT BE CONCEI-
VABLE.
KORN

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